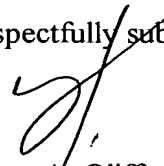


Thus, claims 1-15 define patentable subject matter. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-15 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: March 15, 2004

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